



Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General CIP Code 52.0401

Introduction – Program of Study

Secretaries and administrative assistants perform a variety of administrative and clerical duties necessary to run an organization efficiently. They serve as information and communication managers for an office; plan and schedule meetings and appointments; organize and maintain paper and electronic files; manage projects; conduct research; and disseminate information by using the telephone, mail, websites, and email. They also may handle travel and guest arrangements.

Secretaries and administrative assistants use a variety of office equipment, such as fax machines, photocopiers, scanners, and videoconferencing and telephone systems. In addition, these individuals often use computers to complete tasks previously handled by managers and professionals. These tasks include: spreadsheet creation; correspondence composition; database management; and presentation, report, and document origination, using desktop publishing software and digital graphics. They also may negotiate with vendors, maintain and examine leased equipment, purchase supplies, manage areas such as stockrooms or corporate libraries, and retrieve data from various sources.

Secretaries and administrative assistants usually work in schools, hospitals, corporate settings, government agencies, or legal and medical offices. Their jobs often involve sitting for long periods of time. A few participate in job sharing arrangements, in which two people divide responsibility for a single job.

Most secretaries and administrative assistants, once hired, tend to acquire more advanced skills through on the job instruction by other employees or by equipment and software vendors. Others may attend classes or participate in online education to learn how to operate new office technologies, such as information storage systems, scanners, or new updated software packages. As office automation continues to evolve, retraining and continuing education will remain integral parts of secretarial jobs.

Secretaries and administrative assistants generally advance by being promoted to other administrative positions with more responsibilities. Qualified administrative assistants who broaden their knowledge of a company's operations and enhance their skills may be promoted to senior or executive secretary or administrative assistant, clerical supervisor, or office manager.

Assumptions of this Program of Study

High quality programs should meet the following standards:

1. Promote positive working relationships.
2. Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of skill development
3. Use appropriate and effective teaching approaches.
4. Provide ongoing assessments of student progress.
5. Employ and support qualified teaching staff.
6. Establish and maintain relationships and use resources of the community.
7. Provide a safe and healthy learning environment.
8. Implement strong program organization and supervision policies that result in high quality teaching and learning.
9. Integrate academic skills and aptitudes necessary for postsecondary education, gainful employment and a foundation of lifelong learning.

CIP Code

52.0401 Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General

The administrative assistant and secretarial science program is designed to prepare students to perform the duties of administrative assistants or secretaries and related occupations. Students compose, key, format and process documents (correspondence, reports, tabulations and forms); compile, proofread, edit and correct documents; operate dictation, transcription equipment and computers; use word processing, spreadsheet, database, desktop publishing, presentation and communication software; receive, distribute and sort incoming mail; prepare outgoing mail; perform basic mathematical functions; operate office equipment; perform records management duties; communicate with others in person, in writing or by telephone; and, perform receptionist duties. Students also receive instruction in business ethics, principles of business law, office procedures, public relations and accounting. Students are provided experiences and instruction needed to satisfy initial employment requirements for administrative assistants and secretaries.

Those completing the program may be employed as administrative assistants or specialists; corresponding, legal, medical, educational and technical secretaries; or in related areas such as general office clerks, clerk typists, word processors, information clerks and records management clerks.

For more information, contact:

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